



May 7, 2025

The Right Honourable Mark Carney, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A2

**Re: The Unconstitutionality of the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement and the Inherent Rights of First Nations**

Further to previous discussions, I am looking forward to meeting soon to start laying out a workplan for reconciliation and prosperity.

In the meantime, I am compelled to contact you in response to the Premier of Alberta's proposal to hold a referendum for the unilateral separation of the province of Alberta from Canada. Any proposed separation would be fundamentally illegitimate and unconstitutional without the explicit, prior informed, and collective consent of the First Nations whose lands and rights predate and supersede the formation of the province and the Canadian state itself.

I also raise serious constitutional and legal concerns regarding the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (NRTA) of 1930 and its continued application to the lands and resources originally belonging to First Nations in what is now known as Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. The NRTA, entered into between the federal government and the three Prairie Provinces, purported to transfer control over Crown lands and natural resources from the federal government to the provinces. However, this transfer occurred without the free, prior, and informed consent of the First Nations whose lands and resources were affected. At no point were First Nations consulted or included in these agreements, in clear violation of the spirit and letter of the treaties signed between the Crown and First Nations, as well as the constitutional protections now enshrined in section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

The Numbered Treaties, including Treaties 6, 7 and 8, did not surrender First Nations title to natural resources. On the contrary, these agreements recognized the sovereignty and

inherent rights of First Nations to manage and benefit from the lands and waters within their territories. The unilateral imposition of the NRTA undermines the solemn promises made under these Treaties and stands in direct conflict with constitutional principles, international customary law, and legal standards such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and the Honour of the Crown.

It is time for Canada and the provinces to acknowledge that the NRTA is incompatible with both the constitutional framework of Canada and the nation-to-nation relationship it has committed to with First Nations. Control over natural resources, and the wealth generated from them, must be restored to First Nations who continue to be the rightful owners of these natural resources. First Nations whose inherent rights to their lands have never been lawfully extinguished.

I call on your office to initiate a constitutional review of the NRTA and its compatibility with section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. Canada should engage in good faith negotiations with affected First Nations to restore jurisdiction and resource control. This would be consistent with Canada's obligations under its Treaty relationships with First Nations and would be consistent with UNDRIP.

The time has come for Canada to move beyond colonial frameworks and honor the truth of its history by restoring justice and self-determination to First Nations.

Megwetch,



Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak  
National Chief

cc. Chiefs in Assembly